

TEACHINGS  
OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT  
ON  
SLAVERY.

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THE  
NEW TESTAMENT CODE  
ON  
SLAVERY.

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EPHESIANS 6 : 5-10.

"SERVANTS, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

"And, ye masters, do the same things to them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him."

THE epistle to the Ephesians contains the Christian code for domestic life. The same for substance is repeated in the epistle to the Colossians. Husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, are severally instructed in their personal and relative duties. To study these duties, to preach upon them, to practice them, is as much a part of the Gospel as to study, preach, and practice the primary duties of repentance and faith. The first sermon of Christ at Nazareth was not a dis-

course on theology, but a plea for humanity, and a promise of blessings to Society, especially to its inferior classes, through his mission of grace.

*The law of Christianity in the relation of master and servant ; the nature of that relation, and the reciprocal duties of master and servant under the Gospel ;* are presented in the text as an essential point in the regimen of a Church of Christ, and in the application of Christianity to human society.

It has been arbitrarily assumed, that because the relation of master and servant is treated of in the same connection with the marriage relation and the parental relation, it rests upon the same natural and moral grounds with these fundamental relations of human life. Hence it is argued that the abuses of SLAVERY are no more valid as an objection against the system of Slavery, than abuses of the marital and parental relations are valid against the institution of marriage. Since all have to do in some form with the relation of master and servant, and since the institution of Slavery now demands the sanction and support of the Federal Government, and the suffrages of all citizens of the United States, it behooves us carefully to examine the Gospel code touching that relation. The question is not one of mere abstract morality, nor of political economy or expediency, but a question of practical Christianity.

*What does the New Testament teach concerning the relation of master and servant ?*

That the New Testament recognizes the existence of Slavery as a *fact*, is plain from various allusions

to that institution, especially in the letters of Paul, and from the instructions given to both masters and slaves. Does then Christianity acknowledge the propriety of that institution, or in any wise give to Slavery its sanction? Does Slavery, as it existed in the Roman empire, find any warrant in the New Testament? Is it there recognized as a *rightful* institution, whose abuses only call for condemnation, in the same way that an abuse of power by the husband or the father is condemned without invalidating the institution of marriage? Is the essence of the relation of master and servant the same with that of husband and wife, and of parent and child?—and are the abuses of that relation to be treated as only upon a level with abuses of the tenderest relations of life?

In answer to these questions I shall show,

1. *That in the Apostolic age, Slavery existed purely as a creature of the Roman law.*

2. *That in defining the duties of the respective parties in that relation, the Apostles nowhere acknowledge the rightfulness of Slavery under the law of God.*

3. *That by placing the parties in that relation under the higher law of Christian love and equality, the Apostles decreed the virtual abolition of Slavery, and did in time abolish it wherever Christianity gained the ascendancy in society or in the state.*

These theses embody the code of the New Testament, and the practice of the Apostles with respect to Slavery in the Roman empire.

## SLAVERY NOT NORMAL NOR DIVINE.

1. *In the Apostolic age Slavery existed purely as a creature of the Roman law.* It was not a normal condition of society, nor was it instituted by the command of God, or derived from his revealed Word; but it was an institution of Roman society created by the civil law.

The family institution exists everywhere as the normal condition of society. It grows out of the very nature of things; the distinction of the sexes, with their correlative instincts and affections. Marriage is a law of nature which lies at the foundation of human society. From this institution arises by the same law of nature, the relation of parents and children. All this is normal. It belongs to the rule or principle of man's existence. It is that without which mankind could not exist. All the rudiments of society are in the family; and the education and even the continuance of the race depends upon these fundamental relations of husband and wife, and parent and child.

But will any one presume to assert this of the relation of master and slave? Does this come into the same category with the relation of husband and wife, as a normal condition of society, a part of the *natural* law under which Society itself exists? Then there has been no such thing as society in New-York since July 4th, 1827, when domestic Slavery was abolished by an act of the Legislature, passed

ten years before. Then, in order to have a true normal condition of society here, we must reëstablish Slavery. Then, in order to the constitution of society in Kansas, Slavery must be there established as its corner-stone. Then there is no true civilization in England, France, or Germany; but Russia and Turkey are the only civilized nations of Europe, these alone having the element of domestic Slavery.

Will any sane man pretend that Slavery is a normal state of society?—that the relation of master and slave belongs to a right and healthy constitution of society, just as the relations of husband and wife, and parent and child, are necessary to the existence of society? Marriage was the original basis of society in Eden, and is its normal condition everywhere; the relation of parent and child is a natural consequence of this; but the relation of master and slave is wholly artificial and arbitrary. It is set up by power and then constituted by law; but does not spring from *nature*. Even the code of Justinian declares that Slavery is “contrary to natural right,” and that “all men by the law of nature are born in *freedom*.”

Moreover, as Slavery in the Apostolic age did not exist, as indeed it never can exist by natural law, so neither was it instituted by the command of God, or derived from his revealed Word. Marriage is not only an ordinance of nature, but was also a positive institution of the Creator in Paradise. Slavery, we have seen, is not, in any case, an ordinance of nature. Is it, then, a positive institution of the Creator? Did

Jehovah ever ordain it, or give to it his sanction? And if so, was Roman slavery derived from any previous ordinance or sanction of the divine law?

Domestic servitude existed in the patriarchal age, and under the Hebrew commonwealth. But it did not originate in a command of God, nor is there any evidence that God approved of it as an institution of society, but much evidence to the contrary.

### THE "CURSE ON HAM."

Men who either do not read the Bible at all, or who read it very carelessly, are prone to speak of the posterity of Ham as doomed by Jehovah to perpetual slavery. What endless changes have been rung upon the "accursed seed of Ham." But there is no such curse in the Bible, nor has any such curse ever been fulfilled upon the children of Ham, as such. *Cush* was the oldest son of Ham, and his son was *NIMROD*, the mightiest name of that dim antiquity, and the founder of that Assyrian empire which for ages ruled all western Asia, and which once and again carried terror into Palestine and Egypt. The growth of all this grandeur and power from cities founded by a grandson of Ham, and peopled by his descendants—a power that shook the earth, and whose memorials outlast the ages—surely does not verify the curse of perpetual bondage *said* to have been pronounced upon the posterity of Ham. The fact is, that no such curse was ever pronounced.

Open the Bible at the 9th chapter of *Genesis*, and the 24th verse, and you there read that "Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him; and he said, cursed be *Canaan*; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren."

Now *Canaan* was *Ham*'s youngest son—as *Ham* himself was the youngest son of *Noah*—and the curse was pronounced upon *Canaan* by name, and is three times repeated. 'You, my youngest son, have put me to shame before your brethren; you shall feel the punishment of this in the degradation of *your* youngest son; he shall be put to shame before his brethren, and his posterity shall feel in their bones the curse of their dishonored ancestor.'

Turning now to the 10th chapter of *Genesis*, (vv. 15–21,) we find the boundaries of *Canaan*'s settlement accurately defined. It was the land afterwards so well known as the land of Palestine, reaching along the coast of the Mediterranean, from *Sidon* to *Gaza*, and eastward to *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. None of the posterity of *Canaan* settled in *Ethiopia*. When, 900 years after, the *Israelites*, the descendants of *Shem*, conquered the land of *Canaan*, and made hewers of wood and drawers of water of all who were not slain in battle, *then* was fulfilled that old prophetic denunciation: "Blessed be the Lord God of *Shem*, and *Canaan* shall be his servant." The only curse ever pronounced upon any of the posterity of *Ham* was fulfilled in the subjugation of the *Canaanites* by the *Israelites*, about 1500 years before Christ. And this, like all slavery in the earliest times, was



the enslavement of *whites*. The institution of slavery in the East was not based upon a distinction of color.

If ever you hear a man, even though he be styled a Doctor of Divinity, justifying African slavery from the curse denounced upon Ham, do you advise him to go to the nearest Sabbath-school, till he can read and understand the Bible.

#### SERVITUDE UNDER THE PATRIARCHS.

As to the Patriarchs, the recorded fact that Abraham and Jacob had bond-servants is no more evidence that God approved of Slavery, than the recorded fact that each of these patriarchs had two wives is proof that God approves of bigamy, or the record, twice made, and without censure, that Abraham equivocated about Sarah, is proof that the Bible sanctions lying.

When we shall see a modern slaveholder arm his 318 servants, and lead them hundreds of miles, over mountain, river, and desert, into a foreign and unsettled country, where no law or power can bind them to his service—when we shall see him thus heading his own trained and equipped household, for the rescue of an unfortunate kinsman, and dividing with them the spoils of war, we may begin to trace in that slaveholder some resemblance to the patriarch Abraham.\* Or when we shall see some modern planter commissioning his chief servant to go hundreds of miles beyond the reach of

\* Gen. 14 : 13-17.

plantation laws, equipped with dromedaries and laden with jewels and gold—having every facility for escape—yet trusted to choose a wife for his master's son, and to negotiate the marriage-contract,\* then again we may discern the features of patriarchal slavery in the slavery of modern times. How palpable it is that Abraham did not hold his servants as chattel-slaves. He was himself but a sojourner in the land of Canaan. No local law would guard his rights as a master.

But aside from the utter want of parallelism between domestic servitude under the patriarchs and modern chattel-slavery, shall we make no account of the greater light enjoyed in our times? It has been aptly said, that “if Abraham were now living among us, he would be put into the penitentiary for bigamy.”† Shall we go back to study morality in the twilight of the patriarchal age? Those modern slaveholders who seek to cover themselves with the mantle of the patriarchs, remind one of the ignorant and superstitious peasantry of Italy, who, when their vines were blasted, offered a special prayer to the “most holy patriarch Noah,” invoking his intercession, on the ground that he was the special patron of the vine, and familiar with its qualities. If we are to copy the patriarchs in points where their example is not commended or enjoined in the Bible, then let us have the “patriarchal institutions” entire—inebriety, equivocation, deception, bigamy, polygamy, as well as slavery. Nay, nay. It is the

glory of the Bible that it is so great, so good, so true in itself, so instinct with the sense of justice and of right, that it can afford to record, without comment, the failings of the best of men, and leave us to judge these by its own infallible standard.

### THE MOSAIC CODE.

The laws of *Moses* did not introduce Slavery among the Jews. The story of Joseph is evidence that Slavery then existed throughout Arabia and Egypt. In making laws for a semi-barbarous and intractable people, *Moses suffered* many things because of the hardness of their hearts. A careful study of his code demonstrates that "the Mosaic statutes respecting the relation of master and slave are obviously modifications and amendments of a previously-existing common-law, and are designed to meliorate the condition of the slave, to protect him from oppression, and to promote the gradual disuse and abolition of slavery."\*

By that law, kidnapping, or the stealing of men to make them slaves, which was the origin of all the Slavery in this country, was a capital crime. "He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, *he shall surely be put to death.*"

By that law a fugitive slave was not to be returned to his master. By that law a slave maimed by his master, a female slave violated by her master, were entitled to freedom, and the master was

\*Slavery, by L. Bacon, p. 29. *Michaelis* vol. 1, p. 9.

held responsible for any act of severity to a slave. By that law slaves were to have the same religious privileges with their masters. By that law the Hebrew slave was set free every seventh year, and there was an emancipation of all poor and oppressed Israelites every fiftieth year. The ranks of slaves were recruited from thieves, debtors, and captives in war; but the slave was always treated as a *person*; the laws were altogether in his favor; and *perpetual, unmitigated Chattelism, was a thing unknown among the Hebrews.*

The enslaving of the heathen was permitted to the Israelites under certain regulations. By the law of nations in the earliest times, they had a right to enslave or to kill all captives taken in war. The laws of Moses modified and humanized this bloody common-law. And if the Israelites were allowed to hold bondmen from among the heathen with somewhat more of rigor than they could hold a Hebrew servant, this, like the conquest and subjugation of Canaan, was part of the special judgment decreed by Jehovah against idolaters, and inflicted through Israel as his chosen people. We laugh at the absurdity of those who would find in the command given to Joshua to exterminate the Canaanites, a divine warrant for the Puritans and their descendants to exterminate the aborigines from this continent. But is that any greater absurdity than the logic which finds, in a special and restricted permission given to the Hebrews to hold heathen bond-servants, a perpetual divine warrant for chattel-slavery?

## LATER JEWISH LEGISLATION.

The regulations of the Mosaic Code had their natural and designed effect. They made the care of slaves so much a burden to the master, they made the rights of slaves so prominent and so valid, that even the mild and modified form of Slavery tolerated by the Mosaic law, gradually died away. The fact that Solomon levied upon the remnant of the Canaanites for bond-service in building the Temple, shows that even his roll of "servants born in his house," could not have been great.\* There is no evidence that the Hebrews in Palestine, ever engaged in the foreign slave-trade. The Prophets denounced the abuses of Slavery, and urged the abolition of the system.†

The traditionary Jewish laws upon this subject, codified by the pious and learned Maimonides, are instructive, as showing the increasing leniency of the system in the latter times of the Hebrew commonwealth.‡ This code required that an adult slave, purchased by a Hebrew from an idolater, should be circumcised; but this must be done with the free consent of the slave himself; otherwise he must be returned to his heathen master. If voluntarily circumcised, he was entitled to the privileges of a proselyte in the house of Israel. The code required that the master should be kind to his slave, and not let

\* 1 Kings 9 : 20, 21.

† See Isaiah 1 : 17 : "*Relieve [or righten] the oppressed ;*" 58 : 6, "*Let the oppressed go free ; break every yoke ;*" also Jer. 34, etc.

‡ See Appendix A.

his yoke weigh too heavy on him. "He must find him in sufficient meat and drink, and must not abuse him either by word or deed, nor rebuke him with rage; but must speak to him mildly, and must give him time to offer his defense in case of culpability."

How manifest is it that the slave was a *person* owing service, and not a mere piece of property. The law favored manumission or emancipation upon the soil, in a variety of ways. A converted slave, that is, a circumcised Gentile, could claim his freedom of the magistrates if his master sold him to an idolater, or to a proselyte of the gate; or could assert his freedom by running away. Such a slave residing in Judea, recovered his freedom if his master sold him to any person whatever out of the land of Judea—even to a Jew in the adjacent parts of Syria. He could not be taken out of the land of Judea by his master without his free consent. The converted slave of a Hebrew residing in a foreign country, who escaped into Judea, must not be given up to his owner. Thus we see that the traditionary laws of the Hebrews, carrying out the spirit of the Mosaic code, tended to ameliorate the condition of bondmen, and finally to abolish all involuntary servitude, except for crime.\*

#### SLAVERY IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.

It is a fact worthy of notice in this connection, that the four Gospels contain scarce one allusion to Slavery as yet in existence among the Hebrews.

\* See further in *Appendix A.*

In some of his parables our Lord draws his illustrations from servants, using the term *δουλος*, (*doulos*;) which in the Greek classics ordinarily denotes a slave. But in New Testament usage that term of itself proves nothing as to the nature of the service; and some of these very illustrations seem to forbid the idea of a *bond*-servant.\* Only three cases are mentioned in the Gospels of persons having servants who may be supposed to have been slaves; and but one of these is at all positive; namely, the Roman centurion, who held his servants by Roman law. The term *δουλος* is applied to the servants of the Capernaum nobleman, and the servant of the high-priest whose ear Peter cut off; but beyond this indeterminate word nothing is intimated of the condition of either.

Some have inferred from the silence of the Gospels upon the subject, that Slavery among the Hebrews had entirely ceased before the time of Christ.\* This is not quite correct; for an incident in the life of *Gamaliel*, the famous Rabbi of that day, shows that he had bond-servants; and sundry allusions in

\* In Matthew 18 : 23-35, we read of a servant (*doulos*) who owed his lord *ten thousand talents*, and was forgiven the debt. This servant (*doulos*) then seized upon a fellow-servant, (*doulos*;) and cast him into prison, for a debt of a hundred pence. The term *doulos* is used throughout, but the transaction hardly comports with the idea of *bond*-service.

So in the parable of the talents, (Luke 19 : 12-26,) the term *δουλος* is used throughout, but the confidential relations of the servants to their lord, the trust reposed in them, the reward given to the faithful, the curt reply of the negligent servant—these several details do not comport with bond-service, certainly not with modern Slavery.

† See in *Barnes*, *Kitt*, *Jay*, *Webb*, *Hughes*, and others.

the Mishna and in Josephus, show that Slavery did exist to a limited extent among the Jews in Palestine till their expulsion under Hadrian. But it is certain that in the time of Christ very few slaves were held in Judea by Hebrew masters. The Jews as a people were subjugated and impoverished; Hebrews were no longer made slaves, except as a punishment for theft; and only the wealthy families, who in that agricultural country were comparatively few, could afford to purchase slaves of the Gentiles. Our Lord and his disciples seldom came in contact with such families, and as his mission was distinctively to the house of Israel, the few proselyted bond-servants living in comparative freedom and ease in the houses of the great, would hardly come under his special notice. At the great marriage-feast in Cana, where all were Jews, there were no slaves, but only *waiters*, (*diakonoi*.) In the family of Lazarus, where Jesus was intimate, Martha did the house-work.

The Savior made his teachings *specific* only with reference to evils that came immediately under his eye, while he laid down principles that apply to every form of evil. To sum up all, then, on this point, Slavery existed among the Hebrews in Judea, in the time of Christ, much as it exists in New-Jersey at this day. We learn from the census that there yet remain in that State 236 slaves; but one is hardly ever reminded that *Slavery* exists in New-Jersey. As to the Romans in Judea, Christ seldom addressed *specific* instructions to them upon any point whatever; but labored among his own nation.



He is silent with respect to gladiatorial shows, to idolatrous rites, and the barbarities of war. Will any one infer that he approved of these? We may, therefore, dismiss Hebrew servitude and its code as having virtually passed away at the date of the New Testament. It had so much declined in Palestine, was so far inoperative, that it had ceased to be conspicuous as an element in the social state of the Jews.

### ROMAN SLAVERY.

That with which we have to do in the New Testament—that system with which the Apostles came in contact, when they went forth from Judea to preach the Gospel throughout the known world—was *Roman Slavery*, which existed neither by natural law, nor by any divine appointment or sanction whatever, not even as derived from the books of Moses,—for the Romans did not go to these for their institutions—but was purely a creature of the *Roman law*.

What, then, was the origin of this Slavery, and what were its essential features? Roman Slavery was the fruit of military conquest. As the Romans extended their territory, they found it necessary, in order to retain their conquests, to reduce to slavery the captives taken in war. The very term *servus*, a slave, is said by the code of Justinian to be derived from the fact that captives were *preserved* alive and sold, instead of being put to death. The conquered

were considered as booty; and persons, as well as cattle and things, were distributed among the conquerors, or were sold for the benefit of the state. Hence, slaves came to be treated as *cattle* or *chattels*—*capitalia*, goods movable or immovable, such as flocks, herds, and other possessions;—a thing unknown in Hebrew law. After the final defeat of the Samnites by the Romans, 36,000 prisoners of war were sold as slaves.\* In the first Punic war, 20,000 prisoners were taken and sold. The victory over the Cimbri yielded 60,000 captives. The Gallic wars of Cæsar are said to have furnished 400,000 prisoners for slaves. These were of various nations. Slavery was not then based upon distinction of color as marking an original inferiority of race, according to the doctrine of recent times; it did not claim a divine sanction in the curse on Ham—the Romans knew nothing of Noah or his posterity; it was based solely upon *power*—the power of lawless violence to subdue numerical or physical weakness.

The taste for idle luxury engendered by the sudden acquisition of large and fertile territories, and the creation of a servile class to cultivate without wages the immense estates of the wealthy citizens of Rome, encouraged also the foreign slave-trade as a branch of commerce. Not only was the interior of Africa ravaged to supply the market of Rome,

\* *Niebuhr* (Hist. vol. iii.) distrusts Livy's figures, and even decimates them; but he considers the number of slaves in *Capua* to have been very large.

but Asia Minor, Sardinia, Spain, and Britain, yielded cargoes of slaves to build the public works of the capital, to serve her wealthy citizens, and to gratify the brutal passions of the mob by fighting with wild beasts in the arena. The island of Delos was the great centre of this traffic; sometimes 10,000 slaves were transhipped there in one day.

Roman slavery made no distinction between the descendants of Ham, and those of Shem and Japhet. It rested upon conquest. Slave merchants always accompanied the Roman armies. So many slaves were brought from Asia Minor as the spoils of war, that "*Phrygian*" became as common a name for slave as "*African*" is in our day. When Cæsar invaded Britain, the taunt that the conquest was worthless was met by pointing to the slaves brought from that island—"Not a scruple of silver; but many slaves." Roman slavery made our ancestors its prey; though Cicero thought the Britons so inferior to the Asiatics, that they were not worth buying. I doubt not that in the monuments of ancient Rome that we now visit with curious eyes, in the ruins of temples, of aqueducts and basilica, and in the paved ways and arches of victory, are courses of brick and stone that were laid by the sweat and toil of *our* ancestors, during the four hundred years when British slaves were merchantable goods upon the Tiber.

The growth of this system in the Roman republic is admirably portrayed by Bancroft, in his essay on "*The Decline of the Roman People*." The in-

stitution of Slavery, and the monopoly of land and labor, gradually deprived the country of that middling class between the extremes of wealth and poverty, which are the real strength of a nation. The Romans went to war, leaving slaves to till the fields. "Instead of little farms studding the country with their pleasant aspect, and nursing an independent race, nearly all the lands of Italy were engrossed by large proprietors, and the plow was in the hands of the slave."\* All trades were acquired by them, and they were hired out by their masters for gain.

*Tiberius Gracchus*, a pure-minded patriot, sought to remedy this evil by an Agrarian law. This much abused law was simply a Homestead Bill. "It was designed to create in Italy a yeomanry: instead of slaves, to substitute free laborers; to plant liberty firmly in the land; to perpetuate the Roman Commonwealth, by identifying its principles with the culture of the soil."† The wise law of Gracchus had met the approval of the people, and was to be decided by the Senate. This body was made up of patrician slaveholders; yet some reasonable compromise was hoped for, even from them. But Slavery, true to its instincts of violence, took up the bludgeon when argument failed. The reformer Gracchus, who had dared to assail the system, was beaten to death with clubs by its "gallant" defenders, upon the steps of the capitol, and his corpse was dragged through the streets and thrown into

\* Bancroft Miscellanies, p. 280.

† Bancroft, p. 286.

the Tiber. Modern chivalry has not even the poor merit of originality.

Such was the bloody triumph of Slavery in Rome. All the evils that Gracchus had predicted ensued. The bone and sinew of the nation perished in foreign wars, and Rome counted only aristocratic idlers, free paupers, and innumerable slaves. The lands were impoverished; work and trade were considered ignoble; and nearly all the business of society—its commerce, its trades, its arts, its amusements—all were conducted by slaves for the profit of their masters. Thus free labor was rooted out by a ruinous competition. Then followed servile wars; and thus the way was paved for that despotism which renders the names of Tiberius and Nero forever execrable. Slavery sucked the life-blood of the Roman Republic. Let not the history of her fate be the prophecy of ours.

Since Roman Slavery originated in force, its radical idea was the right of the strong to oppress and degrade the weak. Hence, from the outset, it differed from Slavery among the Hebrews in this—that while the Hebrew law of servitude regarded the slave as a *person* under limited obligations to his master, the Roman regarded him as a *thing*, a *chat-tel*, entirely at his master's disposal. Let this distinction be carefully noted. It is the radical distinction between the Slavery which had obtained among the Hebrews, but had almost ceased to be in the time of Christ, and the Roman Slavery which everywhere met the eye of the Apostles in their mission-

ary tours. Cicero and other Roman publicists of the first authority, in their definition of the term *servi*, include horses and mules as well as slaves; and by the Roman law slaves were taxed in the property of the master, along with houses, lands, beasts, and bronze money.

Liddell, one of the most careful writers upon Roman history, thus describes the condition of the Roman slaves: "They had no civil rights; they could not contract legal marriage; they had no power over their children; they could hold no property in their own name; their very savings were not their own, but held by consent of their masters; all law-proceedings ran in the name of the master. For crimes committed they were tried by the public courts, and the masters were held liable for the damage done, but only to the extent of the slave's value. To kill, maim, or maltreat a slave, was considered as damage to his master, and could only be treated as such. No pain or suffering inflicted on a slave was punishable, unless loss had thereby accrued to the owner."\* Says Bancroft: "In the eye of the law, a slave was nobody. No protection was afforded his limb or his life, against the avarice or rage of his master; the female had no defense for her virtue and her honor; the ties of affection and blood were disregarded."†

This is Chattelism; these are laws not for *persons*, but for *chattels*; not for *men*, but for *things*. We have seen that the Hebrew law cared for the slave

\* Vol. I, 454.

† Mts. p. 302.

—protected his person, gave him redress against injuries inflicted by the master, and especially guarded the sanctity of marriage and of female virtue. The Roman law reversed all this. There was no legal marriage among slaves; the children of the mother were born to her condition; a slave could not testify in court; if a master was slain in his house, by an unknown hand, all his slaves were put to death without trial. Tacitus narrates an instance in which four hundred slaves were put to death, on the suspicion that one of them had murdered his master.

One could hardly believe the cruelties said to have been inflicted upon slaves, had not Roman Slavery survived to our time, to witness against itself. The whip was always at hand. If a slave spoke or coughed without permission, he was flogged. If a maid committed the least blunder in the toilet of her mistress, her back must feel the thong or the heated iron. Scourges loaded with lead, or furnished with prongs, the yoke, the brand, the pincers, the rack, were common modes of torture. There were torturers by profession, to whom masters sometimes sent their slaves for the refinements of cruelty. Cato, the moralist of Rome, was accustomed to exercise himself, after supper, by flogging such of his slaves as had not waited properly upon the table. Worn-out slaves were turned out to die. Sometimes a slave was crucified or burnt alive, at the caprice of his master.\*

\* Bib. Repos. vol. 6, Art. Roman Slavery, p. 422. Also *Blair*; and *Mich-  
el's* "*Roman Republic*."

Such was Roman Slavery, and this is the Slavery which, IN ITS ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF CHATTELISM, and with many of its horrid incidents, has been transmitted to our times, and exists upon our soil.\* There was, however, one relief in the ancient system, which is wanting in its modern representative. In the earlier history of Rome the manumission of slaves upon the soil was frequent. Masters were accustomed to reward favorite slaves with their freedom, and these *freedmen* had civil rights; some of them even became eminent as poets, artisans, and statesmen. Even the barbarism of Rome did not make expatriation a condition of emancipation. About the year of Rome 430, personal slavery for debt was abolished by law.†

Such was Slavery as it existed in the time of Christ and his Apostles; a creature of the Roman law, the offspring of force, and sustained by cruelty and terror.

## DID CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES SANCTION SLAVERY?

II. The question now arises, did Christ and the Apostles *sanction* this system? I might well leave it to your moral sense to answer that question. The Bible disciplines our moral sense to the intent that we may judge of right and wrong without the aid of specific precepts. Apply that moral sense to

\* For proof, see Appendix C.

† *Arnold*, Hist. p. 316, Am. Ed.



the case before us. You see what was Roman Slavery. Do you believe—*can* you believe—dare you so much as harbor the thought that Christ and his Apostles ever *could* have sanctioned such a system? You know better. Every man who has a conscience knows better.

Yet it is argued that they did sanction this Slavery, because they are silent as to the system and its evils, and because they gave instructions to those who were in the relation of master and slave, as constituted by the Roman law.

These arguments were urged upon the floor of the General Assembly, (New School,) at its session in New-York, in May, 1856.

Said a Southern divine, and a Northern one echoed it: "I affirm that slavery is one of the social relations of men. It is like husband and wife, parent and child, older and younger, teacher and scholar, magistrate and citizen, merchant and clerk, captain and soldier, sovereign and people. These relations of life are expressly ordained of God; or they exist in that social economy which is the result of Divine Providence. In all these there is service. This service is found to be either voluntary or involuntary, and, as to duration, brief or protracted. There is either restraint or liberty in them all. In them all there is a liability to oppression. The common talk of oppression in the relation of master and slave is just as applicable to all these social relations."\*

\* Speech of Rev. Dr. Ross. The fallacy of Dr. Ross lies in the assumption that the relation of master and servant can exist only under a system

Such was the language uttered by ministers of Christ in that Assembly. Is it true? Is this the Gospel of the grace of God?

In reply to this argument, I take the position that *in defining the duties of master and servant, the New Testament nowhere admits the rightfulness of Roman slavery under the law of God.*

With respect to the alleged silence of Christ and his Apostles upon Slavery and its evils, I remark first that they were not wholly silent on that subject, and, secondly, that their silence gives no sanction to the system.

We have already seen that Christ hardly came in contact with the institution of Slavery—for it was no longer prominent among the Jews to whom his mission was mostly confined. He laid down general principles; but commented only on specific evils that existed around him. And yet Christ laid the axe at the root of Slavery, as at the root of Despotism, in his first sermon at Nazareth, when he said: “I am come to preach glad tidings to the poor; to preach deliverance to the captives; to set at liberty them that are bound; to proclaim a jubilee from God.”

Christ bore witness against Slavery, when he denounced all pride and ambition, covetousness and oppression of the poor. Christ reasserted the unity of the race; the equality of all men before God; He reenacted the law of Sinai, “Thou shalt love thy

of Slavery. Whereas, the dependence of labor upon capital makes that a natural relation everywhere. His illustration proves nothing for Slavery

neighbor as thyself;" and expounded this by the precept, "*Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*" Who ever heard of an advocate of Slavery so in love with the system, that he would have others do to him as he does to the helpless slave?

Was James silent when he said: "Go to, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, *crieth*; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Are these cries of the oppressed that pierce the heavens and reach the ear of God—*silence*? Was Paul silent when he said: "The law is made for murderers, for adulterers, for *men-stealers*, for liars, for perjurers, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, *according to the glorious Gospel* of the blessed God"?

But he was silent, it is said, as to the abolition of Slavery. "He did not denounce it as an evil or a sin." Did he therefore sanction the system? The argument proves too much. If silence as to Slavery argues an approval of the system, then silence as to its enormities argues an approval of these as a part of the system; and silence as to other organic laws and evils in the Roman empire argues that these also were sanctioned, or at least allowed. Here, then, let us consult facts in other relations.

## / THE DOMESTIC CODE OF ROME.

In the Roman empire arbitrary power was not vested only in the holder of slaves. Every Roman *father* possessed that power equally with the master.\* When a child was born, it was left to the father to decide whether it should live or die. The infant was placed upon the ground. If the father took it up, he signified his intention to rear it; if he let it lie, it was exposed in the street or by the river to perish, or to be taken up by some stranger, who might then claim it as his slave. If the father claimed the child, his power over him was as absolute as that of the master over the slave; and it continued through life unless the son was formally emancipated, and made a citizen. The earnings of the son could be claimed by the father; who had also the right to scourge his son, to sell him into slavery, to imprison him, to banish him, to put him to death.

This was the relation of father and son by Roman law. Gibbon thus describes it: "In the forum, the senate, or the camp, the adult son of a Roman citizen enjoyed the public and private rights of a person; in his father's house he was a mere thing; confounded by the laws with the movables, the cattle and the slaves, whom the capricious master might alienate or destroy, without being responsible to any earthly tribunal. At the call of indigence

\* This illustration was first suggested to me by the admirable essays of Rev. W. Hague, D.D., on Christianity and Slavery. I believe that this use of it is original with him.

or of avarice, the master of a family could dispose of his children or his slaves. According to his discretion, a father might chastise the real or imaginary faults of his children by stripes, by imprisonment, by exile, by sending them to the country to work in chains among the meanest of his servants. The majesty of a parent was armed with the power of life and death; and the example of such bloody executions, which weresometimes praised and never punished, may be traced in the annals of Rome beyond the times of Pompey and Augustus.\*

Nor was this all. The husband had much the same power over the wife, which the master had over the slave, and the father had over the son. In law the wife was nothing. The husband, if he fancied himself injured, could inflict corporeal punishment upon his wife, and if she was guilty of wine-drinking or infidelity, with certain formalities he could put her to death. Indeed, the authority of the husband over the wife in pagan Rome was quite up to the notions of some modern divines as to a husband's rights.†

Such was the family despotism which existed in the Roman Empire in the time of Christ and his apostles. And yet the New Testament is entirely silent with respect to this bloody code of domestic law. Nowhere in that book can you find a command, "Husbands do not whip or kill your wives;" nowhere can you find a command, "Fathers, do not

\* Decline and Fall, vol. iii., p. 169.

† See speeches in General Assembly (N. S.) for 1856.

scourge your sons, nor sell or torture them, nor send them into exile, nor put them to death." Nowhere do you find a protest against this domestic tyranny of law and custom as contrary to the Gospel of Christ. Nowhere do you even find an allusion to it as an evil to be done away. What then? Did Paul sanction that horrible tyranny of the husband and the father? Does his silence respecting the Roman law of domestic life show that he either approved or tolerated that law? Is that your logic?

Remember that this tyranny of the husband over the wife, and of the father over the son, was just as much *established by law*, as was the power of the master over the slave. If therefore the silence of the Apostle as to slavery and its evils is an evidence that he sanctioned Roman Slavery, then his silence as to this household despotism is evidence that he sanctioned that. We are told, that "there were 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman empire, and yet Paul says nothing against slavery." So were there millions of wives and sons in that empire, living under domestic tyranny, and yet he says nothing of their oppressions. And yet there was never a more flagrant violation of the law of God than the Roman law of the family. The defense of Roman Slavery from the alleged *silence* of the New Testament concerning it, proves too much, and falls to the ground.

In the time of Paul the brutal sports of the arena were common in the Roman empire. Trained gladiators, or captives and criminals, were set to fight

wild beasts or to fight one another in the amphitheater, for the amusement of the multitude. Paul was perfectly familiar with these gladiatorial shows; indeed, some suppose that he himself was once compelled to fight with beasts at Ephesus. He sometimes draws his illustrations of the Christian warfare from these contests of the gladiators. Yet he is *silent* as to the barbarous tendencies of such sports. Did he therefore *sanction* them? Is that your logic?

### NO RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE IN ROME.

Slavery in the Roman Empire existed by virtue of the civil law. But in the time of the *Empire*, the people had no voice in making the laws, and could do nothing whatever to change or abolish them. This rested solely with the Emperor. And in the time of Paul, freedmen had come to be regarded by slaveholders as a nuisance, and restraints were imposed upon masters who might wish to emancipate their slaves. In the reign of Nero surely, the people had no sovereignty, no elective franchise, no legislative power. They were restrained in their personal liberties, so that there was almost nothing which *they* could do legally for the removal of slavery. In such circumstances silence does not imply assent. Besides, the epistles of the New Testament were not tracts published to act upon society at large, but manuscript letters sent to little companies of persons to instruct them in their duties. Hence we are

not to look to them for a general discussion of public affairs.

This consideration has great significance. We are apt to conceive of the New Testament in primitive times, as being before the public much as it is in our day; forgetting not only that it was not then a printed book, but also that it was not even a *book* reduced to form by the final arrangement of the sacred Canon. The Apostles wrote letters to local assemblies of believers, which were composed generally of poor and uninfluential persons, and these letters were first read in these assemblies, and then copies were multiplied by hand. Keeping in view the persons whom they addressed and their object in writing, we cease to wonder at their omission of many topics relating to society at large.

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO SERVANTS.

But it is said that the Apostles give instructions to parties in the relation of master and slave, and thereby give an implied sanction to Slavery itself. Precisely the opposite of this is true. Whatever instructions they give to parties implicated in the system, they nowhere admit the rightfulness of Slavery under the law of God, but often imply the contrary.

In prescribing the relative duties of husbands and wives, and of parents and children, the New Testament distinctly sets forth the divine authority of marriage and the parental relation. In giving in-



structions to rulers and subjects, the New Testament teaches the divine authority of civil government, though it does not give a divine right to particular rulers or to particular forms of government.

But in giving instructions to masters and servants the New Testament does *not* speak of Slavery as existing by the appointment or authority of God; you can not find in these instructions one word in vindication of Slavery, or one word in approval of the relation of master and slave as a desirable relation for either party. They are simply told how to conduct themselves in a relation established by laws above their control. This omission is significant.

Let us see now, how far these apostolic precepts look toward an approval of Slavery. "Art thou called, being a servant?" Does the grace of God come to you in the lowly condition of a bondman? "Care not for that." Do not fret and chafe that you, who are called to be a son of God and an heir of heaven, called to sit with Christ and to judge angels, are here held in bondage by a fellow-man; abide patiently in your lot. "But if thou mayest be free"—if you have the opportunity to gain your freedom—"USE IT RATHER." Does that look like a sanction of Slavery?

Paul had no such opinion of the happy lot of a slave as to advise him to continue thankfully in that condition, if he could change it. Peter says: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, (that is, the fear of God;) not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy,

if a man for conscience sake toward God, endure grief, *suffering wrongfully.*" Does that look like an approval of the system? Then did the Apostle approve of the conduct of Pilate and the Jews towards Christ, whom he holds up to those abused slaves as an example of patience in suffering. His argument to the servant is not based at all upon the lawfulness or desirableness of his lot, but upon the example of Christ. "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye follow in his steps."

There is a tone of compassion in all the instructions of the Apostles to servants, which is far from indicating an approval of Slavery. *They* did not meet in ecclesiastical assemblies to argue the advantages of a state of servitude; how good a thing it is that such poor, ignorant creatures have masters to care for them; how superior their lot is to that of the freedmen around them; no, when the Apostles speak of servants, there is a tone of humanity toward such as are in bonds; they address them as in a condition hard to be borne; but since the providence of God—mark, not the *moral preference* but the *providential* will of God, which suffers so much evil in the world—since this suffers them to be in that condition, they should be meek, and patient, and faithful, "that by well doing they may put to silence the scandal of foolish men" about the licentiousness of the Gospel. They were not to lie or steal, or be idle, because they felt themselves to be oppressed; they were to obey even hard mas-

ters, not because the law of God had set these masters over them, not because God had instituted Slavery and put them in bondage as the best possible condition for them and their children; not because God approved of that condition; but because as Christians they were bound, in whatsoever state they were, to honor Christ and his cause. If a Christian was a prisoner, he must honor Christ as Paul did in his bonds; and if he were a slave, he must do the same. John Bunyan must not lie or kill his keeper because he is cast into Bedford jail; he must be a well-behaved prisoner. Was his imprisonment therefore just?

Did Christ indorse the administration of Herod and Pilate by paying tribute money? Did Paul indorse the bloody reign of Nero, by exhorting Christians to be peaceable, law-abiding citizens? No more does he indorse Roman Slavery by the instructions he gives to servants. On the contrary he condemns that system in the very tone of these instructions: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh." Why? Because they have bought you and have a right to your services? Because they have reared you and taken care of you? Because the law requires this of you? Because you have no rights as men? Because God has set up Slavery for your good? No, but "as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service to the Lord—AND NOT TO MEN." They are to ennoble the lowly condition in which they are placed, with the

dignity of the Christian doing in all things the will of God. Where is Slavery approved, where is the Roman law of Slavery admitted to be right by the law of God in any counsel or instruction given to those in that relation? Nay, the foundation of that whole system, which was CHATTELISM, is knocked away by every precept that addresses the slave as a MAN, bought with the blood of Christ and accountable to God. The servant is brought under moral responsibility, which a chattel can not feel.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO MASTERS.

III. But there are instructions to masters as well as to slaves, and these lead me to my last position; namely, *That by ignoring the Roman law of Slavery, and placing both master and servant under the higher law of Christian love and equality, the Apostles decreed the virtual abolition of Slavery, and did in time subdue it, wherever Christianity gained the ascendancy in society or in the state.*

Christianity was a kingdom within a kingdom. Penetrating through all forms of government and of society, it gave its law directly to the soul; and then, working from the individual outward, it leavened and renovated society and its institutions. It did not work by social revolution as a means to an end, but produced social revolution as a necessary consequence of its transformation of the individual. But it is a great fallacy to suppose that because the result to be effected by Christianity was gradual

and remote, therefore the *principle* tending to that result was left to a gradual development. The principle which should regulate society, and which in time would reform society in the mass, was laid down at the outset as *the supreme law for the individual*.

Because the process of social transformation must needs be slow, the necessity for that transformation, and the principles by which it must be effected, were not left to be gradually discovered in the future. No individual was suffered to hide himself under the shadow of society; to plead that an evil or abuse with which he was implicated was a social evil that time must cure, and to take advantage of the delay in reforming society, to indulge a little longer his own complicity with the wrong. No; the law that was to permeate and revolutionize society was given *as a law* to the individual believer, the moment he entered the kingdom of God. He could not cross the threshold of that kingdom until he bowed his will to the supremacy of that law.

#### THE LAW OF CHRIST.

The Apostles have nothing to say specifically against the abuse of wives by their husbands, or of children by their parents; they do not legislate against specific evils of slavery, or against the system as a whole;—Why? Because they and their Master have given to every Christian a law which renders all such acts incompatible with fellowship in the kingdom of God. Paul does not assail

the Roman code ; he does not blindly butt against what he could not move ; but he gives to Christians a law that lifts them out of the pale of that code in all their intercourse with one another. They must still live under Roman law, and make the best of it ; but that is not to be their standard or their shield. "*Dare any of you, having a matter against another, to go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints ?*" How could a Christian take advantage of the Roman law to enslave another, or to exact of him unrequited labor ? The rights of master and servant must be adjusted, not before the heathen, but before the saints ; not by the Roman slave-code, but by the law of Christ. And what was that law ? "ONE is your Master, even Christ, and ALL YE ARE BRETHREN." "A new commandment I give to you, that ye love another ; *even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*"

Christians were a peculiar people. They formed a spiritual society apart from the world—fellow-citizens of the commonwealth of Israel. In this relation they ceased to be under the Roman law as their source of right or rule of action. Hence the relation of master and servant was at once lifted out of the plane of the civil law into the higher plane of Christian love. The outward relation constituted by law might not cease, it might not be possible legally to terminate this, but the essence of Slavery was abolished by the fundamental law of Christianity.

See how the Gospel transforms this Roman chattel into a Christian man : "*Masters, render to your serv-*

*ants that which is just and equal.*" Treat them as your equals in all the essential rights of men—as husbands, as fathers, as laborers worthy of their hire, as rational and immortal souls, give to them EQUALITY.\* These words are the death-blow of Roman chattel-slavery. They are good where slavery does not exist—for every relation of master and servant; but they abolish slavery at a stroke. And these words are enforced by a solemn reference to the judgment—"knowing that both your and their Master is in heaven; *neither is there respect of persons with Him.*" And then, on the other hand, the servant made free by the Gospel is not to plume himself on that, nor to set himself upon his dignity; but to be voluntarily humble and faithful in his posi-

\* Rev. Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, whose learning and orthodoxy none will dispute, and whom none will accuse of "abolitionism," thus comments on this passage in his recent work on Ephesians.

*"Give to your servants that which is just and equal.* That is, act towards them on the principles of justice and equality. Justice requires that all their rights as men, as husbands, and as parents, should be regarded. And these rights are not to be determined by the civil law, but by the law of God. 'As the laws,' says Calvin, 'gave great license to masters, many assumed that every thing was lawful which the civil statute allowed; and such was their severity that the Roman emperors were obliged to restrain their tyranny. But although no edicts of princes interposed in behalf of the slave, God concedes nothing to the master beyond what the law of love allows.' Paul requires for slaves not only what is strictly just, but *τὴν ἰσότητα*. What is that? Literally, it is *equality*. This is not only its signification, but its meaning. Slaves are to be treated by their masters on the principles of equality. Not that they are to be equal with their masters in authority or station, or circumstances; but *they are to be treated as having, as men, as husbands, and as parents, EQUAL RIGHTS WITH THEIR MASTERS.* It is just as great a sin to deprive a slave of the just recompense for his labor, or to keep him in ignorance, or to take him from his wife or child, as it is to act thus towards a free man. This is the equality which the law of God demands, and on this principle the final judgment is to be administered."

tion, not quitting a master because that master is declared to be his equal. "They that have believing masters, let them not *despise* them because they are brethren."\* How could a chattel despise its owner? How would that caution sound in the ears of modern slaveholders? What Southern church would tolerate such an exhortation to its slaves?

Hear now the decree of the Apostle Paul for the abolition of Slavery: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. You are all alike covered with Christ's righteousness and radiant with his glory. Each and every one of you is Christ. And now shall the Christ *here* oppress and injure the Christ *there*? Shall one soul, made bright with the glory of Christ, soil and trample under foot that glory in another? Nay, ye have each and all, put off self and put on Christ;—there is neither Jew nor Greek—there are no favorites in this spiritual commonwealth; there is *neither bond nor*

\* In 1 Tim. 6 : 1, 2, Paul makes a distinction between two classes of servants. First, those still "*under the yoke*," that is, having heathen masters, are to be submissive and obedient, from a regard to the honor of God. Secondly, those having "believing masters" are not to *despise* those masters, because Christianity has taken away their legal preëminence, and reduced them to a common *brotherhood* with their servants. Does not this argue the virtual emancipation of every slave whose master became a Christian?

The case of Onesimus is in point. He wished to return to his once legal master, whom probably he had defrauded when he ran away. Paul certifies his conversion, assumes his debts, and expects Philemon to receive him, "*not* now as a servant, but *above* a servant, a *brother beloved*." For Philemon to have done otherwise would have been contrary to the Gospel. Paul might have retained Onesimus, and would have done so had he not felt that Philemon could be trusted to treat him as a brother. Onesimus, if he ever was a slave, did not return as such.



*free*—no distinctions of caste are here allowed ; there is neither male nor female—no tyranny of the stronger sex over the weaker, no special privileges whatever in this kingdom ; for ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus.” Truly has it been said that “this law of Christ was the law of laws. Its authority was imperial. Its decision was ultimate. Where the law of the empire was at variance with the law of Christ, who can doubt to which Christians would yield the supremacy ?”\*

### RESULTS AND DUTIES.

The principle of equality which the New Testament lays down for the government of its disciples, wrought out the abolition of Slavery first in the Church, and by the Church throughout the Roman Empire. According to Neander : “Christian masters looked upon their servants no longer as slaves ; but as their beloved brethren. They prayed and sang in company ; they could sit at each other’s side at the feast of brotherly love, and receive together the body of our Lord.” Church-laws were made in favor of slaves. Even the sacred vessels of the Church were sold for their redemption ; and in the reign, of Constantine the emancipation of slaves was performed as a religious act in the churches and on the Sabbath. Guizot testifies that “the spirit and genius of Christianity abolished slavery through-

\* *Hague*. Christianity and Statesmanship ; to which I would again refer the reader for a masterly treatment of this whole subject.

out the world," and even Gibbon admits the facts, though he withholds from Christianity its meed of praise. The law of Christ is a law of emancipation.

What, then, is the application of this law to our circumstances and times? The system of Slavery which exists in this country is the Roman system of chattelism. It does not descend from the patriarchs or the Israelites. It originated in lawless violence; it is upheld by force and terror.\* This system is as incompatible with Christianity as was the Slavery that existed in Apostolic times. It is radically hostile to the Gospel of Christ. What then is the *duty* of Christians toward it? Those who live where the system exists, are bound to free themselves and their churches from all connection with the system of *chattelism* and *forced* service. They may not be able at once to do away with the law of Slavery in the State; but they should practically abolish in the Church the distinction of bond and free, and give to the slave his equal rights as a man. Till Christians at the South do this, are they not responsible for the sin of the system of Slavery?

We ask this in all Christian candor and charity; and we ask them to do no more than Christians at the North have done. When Newport, R. I., was a center of Slavery and the slave-trade, and the wealth of its citizens came mainly from that source, the church of Dr. Samuel Hopkins passed this resolve: "That the slave-trade and the slavery of the Africans as it has taken place among us, is a

\* Appendix C.

gross violation of the righteousness and benevolence which are so much inculcated in the Gospel; and therefore we will not tolerate it in this church." And the church, in face of society, carried out that resolution in its discipline. When Southern churches practically come up to that standard, Slavery will speedily cease.\*

But WE also have a duty in this matter. Except so far as by political or ecclesiastical action we have sanctioned it, we are not indeed responsible for Slavery where it is; we can not intermeddle with it by positive legislation; we must have large charity for those who are in it; we must not judge them by our light. We must speak to them always in Christian love.

But whatever allowance we make for those who are involved in the system by law, custom, or inheritance, we can make none for those who would carry it to curse a soil now free; and we can make no ex-

\* Dr. Hopkins of Newport, being much engaged in urging the sinfulness of Slavery, called one day at the house of Dr. Bellamy in Bethlem, Connecticut, and while there pressed upon him the duty of liberating his only slave. Dr. B., who was an acute and ingenious reasoner, defended slaveholding by a variety of arguments, to which Dr. H. as ably replied. At length Dr. Hopkins proposed to Dr. Bellamy practical obedience to the golden rule. "Will you give your slave his freedom if he desires it?" Dr. B. replied that the slave was faithful, judicious, trusted with every thing, and would not accept freedom if offered. "Will you free him if *he* desires it?" repeated Dr. H. "Yes," answered Dr. Bellamy, "I will." "Call him then." The man appeared. "Have you a good, kind master?" asked Dr. Hopkins. "Oh! yes, very, very good." "And are you happy?" "Yes, Master, *very* happy." "Would you be more happy, if you were free?" His face brightened; "Oh! yes, Master, a great deal more happy." "*From this moment,*" said Dr. Bellamy, "*you are free.*" Go thou and do likewise. (See "Life of Bellamy," Congregational Board.)

excuse for ourselves if we do not our utmost to hinder that. Excuse! Suppose you were asked to join in a foray to capture slaves in Africa, could you find an excuse for that? Suppose a party who had done this should ask you to participate in the spoils, and to give your influence to keep in Slavery those whom they had seized? Could you find an excuse for that? Never could you excuse yourself if you did not repudiate and oppose the outrage. Just such an outrage you, as a citizen of the United States, are asked to sanction. Can you excuse yourself if you do not your utmost to hinder it?

No question of practical Christianity is so imperative upon us to-day as this. Christianity and Slavery can not live together. They have now met face to face upon a virgin soil. We know that in the end Christianity must triumph. We know that Slavery must go down; but this nation, like Rome, may first go down in the struggle. The prayers and efforts of Christians alone can avert a catastrophe which the madness of rulers is hastening on. You can not make this a question of party measures or of political expediency. It is a question of vital, practical Christianity between your soul and God. If you thrust it aside, it will haunt you in night-dreams; and it will face you in "That Day." The day shall come when all party platforms, measures, and resolutions shall be burnt with fire, and all human work and institutions shall be dissolved. Then shall you stand face to face with the slave before Him who is no respecter of persons. The question then will

be: "What did you to secure for this man the blessings of freedom and of the Gospel? When the destiny of millions trembled on the slip of paper you cast into the ballot-box, how did you decide that destiny?" Beware lest the sentence come: "Inasmuch as ye did it *not* to the least of these my brethren, ye did it *not* to me. *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.*"

## APPENDIX A.

FOR the gratification of the curious reader I here subjoin an extract from the *Hilkoth Aabadim*, or "Slave Code," of the Rabbinical Law. For this, as well as for valuable suggestions touching the laws of servitude among the Hebrews, I am indebted to the courtesey of the learned and estimable Dr. N. Y. Raphall of New-York, whose reputation as a scholar is common to both hemispheres.

The *Mishna*, as is well known, embodies in a written form the old traditions of the Rabbins touching the laws of Moses. It is a digest of such Jewish traditions as were of general authority in the second century of the Christian era, when these were reduced to writing by Rabbi Judah, surnamed the *Holy*.

The schools of Babylon and Jerusalem severally appended to the *Mishna* their own commentaries. These are known as the two *Gemaras*. The *Mishna*, with the Babylonian *Gemara* or notes, forms the Babylonian *Talmud*. The same *Mishna*, with the Jerusalem *Gemara* or comments, forms the Jerusalem *Talmud*. That of Babylon, as the more ancient and complete, has the greater authority. In the twelfth century the learned Maimonides made a digest of the laws of the Talmud. His work codifies both the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*, both the text of tradition and the commentaries thereon, and is a standard work among the Jews. The date of the *traditions* themselves is not to be confounded with the date of their *compilation* in the *Mishna*.

Thus much premised concerning the authority of these traditional laws among the Jews, I now give a fair specimen of the laws of slavery in detail. It must be borne in mind that these are not a part of the Mosaic code—not laws of divine appointment—but the interpretation and application of the Mosaic code by the teachers of the Jewish nation, after the captivity. But while they exhibit traces of human imperfection, they also show the benign influence of the legislation of Moses. The history of the ancient world can not show another code of slavery so humane as this.

" Extract from *Hilkoth Aabadim*.

"Laws relating to slaves, from the '*Shoolkan Aazook*,' '*Digest of Rabbinical Law*. Vol. iii. *Torah Oraag*.' '*Teacher of Knowledge*,' sec. 267.

"1. It is a positive commandment (Gen. 17:13) that the owner of slaves is bound to have them circumcised. If he neglects this duty, the Beth-din

(magistrates) must perform it. This applies equally to those born in his household and those bought. The first named to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth, the others on the day of purchase.

"2. If an adult slave be purchased from an idolater, the question must be put to him, 'Art thou willing to become an Israelitish bondman or not?' If he consents, he is to be instructed like any other proselyte, and bathed as such.

"3. If the adult slave purchased from an idolater refuses to become an Israelitish bondman he is not to be compelled. The buyer may retain him twelve months, but not longer, and must before the expiration of that period sell him to a Gentile. Such is also the law in countries where Jews are not permitted to make converts. The buyer of a slave may, however, at the time of purchase, declare to him his intention not to circumcise him, in which case he may retain the heathen slave as long as he pleases. Children are to be bathed by order of the magistrate. If a converted slave be manumitted he must again be bathed as a freeman. The master does not acquire a durable right over the body of his heathen slave until he has bathed him for servitude. If the slave takes advantage of his master, and bathes first, (of his own accord,) declaring himself a free convert, he becomes free but remains debtor to his purchaser, and must refund the amount paid for him gradually as he earns the means. If the magistrates or any private individual cause the slave to bathe and declare himself free, they must refund the purchase-money to the buyer. But, if an individual has, by mere advice, induced the slave to do so, the adviser is free from responsibility.

"12. He who circumcises slaves pronounces the benediction, 'Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast sanctified us to circumcise bondmen.' Where the slave is an adult, the operator must cover his nakedness before he pronounces the benediction.

"17. The slave who has been bathed and circumcised *becomes an Israelite*, and is held to the same performance of his religious duties as women and children are. Such a slave may be held to extreme hard work; but, though the law permits it, piety and reason direct that the master should be kind to his slave, and not let his yoke weigh too heavy on him. He must find him in sufficient meat and drink, and must not abuse him either by word or deed, nor rebuke him with rage, but must speak to him mildly, and must give him time to offer his defense, (in case of culpability.)

"22. Whatever the slave earns or acquires or *has* given to him, belongs to the owner. Even when the gift was made with the express stipulation that it should be exempt from the control of the owner. The only exception is where the gift is made with the express stipulation 'to recover thy freedom,' in which case the owner may refuse the proffered ransom, but it does not become his property unless he sets free the slave.

"26. The slave recovers his freedom either by payment of the sum at which his owner rates him, or by the owners maiming him in either of the twenty-four principal members, (ten fingers, ten toes, two ears, and the two nipples of a woman,) the eyes and the teeth, or by the owner's giving him his freedom.

"44. A letter of manumission must either be handed to the slave before competent witnesses, or the signature of the owner must be attested by competent witnesses. If the owner manumits the slave, but dies before he has signed the letter of manumission, the heir is compelled to sign it. If a slave who has been carried away by heathens, or who runs away, is absent so long that the owner has given up the hope of recovering him, he can not, in case of his coming back, be again held to servitude, but the magistrates compel the owner to grant the slave a letter of manumission.

"69. The offspring of a heathen slave, by her Hebrew master, remains a slave; but the offspring of a converted slave, by her master, is free. It is held, however, that though he be, to all intents and purposes, free, he can not marry a free-born woman until he has obtained a letter of manumission.

"70. A slave whom his owner has united in wedlock with a free-born woman, or one on whose head the owner has placed phylacteries, or who, by order of his owner and in his presence, has read three verses of the law before the congregation, or who, by order of his master, has performed any religious duty incumbent only on free men, becomes free. The magistrates are to compel the owner to grant him a letter of manumission.

"74. In order to be valid the manumission must be attested in writing; a verbal declaration is of no validity, except in the case of a man on his death-bed, whose declaration that he has granted or doth grant freedom to his slave is sufficient; should the owner die before the letter of manumission can be prepared, the magistrates compel the heirs to grant it.

"77. If an owner on his death-bed directs, 'Let my bondwoman N. N. henceforth be exempt from work,' she remains a slave, but the heirs can not force her to labor. If the direction was, 'Let her be well treated,' the heirs can only compel her to do such work as is agreeable to her. In neither case can they sell her. An owner who, on his sick-bed, bequeathes his property to his slave, but subsequently recovers, retains his property, but must grant freedom to his slave, because he has already become considered as a free man.

"81. A converted slave who is sold to an idolater or proselyte of the gate, (one who has not entered into the covenant of circumcision,) becomes free, so that, if he runs away from his purchaser, his former Hebrew owner has no claim on him. Should he not escape, the Hebrew owner is compelled by the magistrate to redeem him, provided the ransom to be paid does not exceed ten times the amount of the sum the slave was sold for, and the owner must then grant him a letter of manumission, so that he can marry a free-born woman. Some hold that when a converted slave has been mortgaged to an idolater, he may with impunity take so much of his Hebrew owner's effects as will free him from heathen bondage."

*The following paragraphs are from the Mishna;—Treatise Gittin, Chap. 3, sec. 6.*

"82. A converted slave who is sold to a master residing out of the land of Judea, either in Syria or Ptolemais, or any other foreign place, recovers his freedom, and the buyer is compelled by the magistrate to grant him a letter of manumission. Even though the buyer plead, 'I only require his services within the land of Israel,' his plea is not to be received.

"84. The owner of a converted slave in Judea, can not carry him out of the land without his consent, though he may sell him to another Hebrew. A converted slave, the property of a Hebrew, residing in a foreign country, who escapes into Judea, is not to be given up to his owner. Such a slave recovers his freedom, but remains a debtor to his former owner for the amount at which he is rated. If the owner residing abroad refuses his consent, the magistrate grants the slave an attestation, and he is free."

Such was the later code of slavery among the Hebrews. While it retains some features of rigor, in accordance with the prevailing spirit of the Israelites toward the heathen, yet how marked is its benignity in comparison with heathen codes of slavery. How carefully throughout is the slave regarded as a *person* having natural and inalienable human rights to be protected by the law—and never as a *chattel* to be held solely at the will and for the profit of the master.



## APPENDIX B.

It is evident, from Josephus, that slaves were held in the family of Herod the Great. His brother *Pheroras* refused the hand of a daughter of Herod, because he was enamored of a female slave. Female slaves in the household of *Antipater* were put to torture because they were suspected of being privy to his conspiracy against the crown. See Bell, *Jud. B. I.*, chap. 30.

After the death of Herod, "Simon, one of the palace-servants, presuming on the symmetry of his figure, and his full stature, assumed the diadem." (Jos. de Bell, *Jud. B. II.*, chap. 4.) Tacitus, however, does not speak of Simon as a slave. (L. V. §9.)

But these instances do not prove the continued existence of Slavery among the *Jews* in the time of Christ. The pretensions of Herod to Jewish lineage, were never fully conceded. His father was an Idumean, and his mother a woman of Arabia. He was a usurper in Judea, and while he humored the Jews as far as possible, with a view to consolidate his power, yet his own tastes and customs were not Jewish.

There are facts, however, which prove conclusively that slaves were occasionally held by Hebrews in Judea, in the time of Christ. I am indebted to Dr. Raphall for the following examples. The first is that of R' Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul (the grandfather of the compiler of the *Mishna*) and his slave *Tabbi*. The passage is in the *Mishna*;—treatise *Berachoth*, chap. ii. §7. "When his slave Tabbi died, he (R. Gamaliel,) received visits of condolence. His disciples said to him: 'Hast thou not taught us, Rabbi, that visits of condolence are not to be received for slaves?' He answered them: 'My slave Tabbi was not like other slaves: he was pious.'" This expression shows that R' Gamaliel was not the only slaveholder then in Judea.

In the *Mishna*, Aboth, chap. 2, §7, we find that Hillel, the ancestor of R' Gamaliel, (and appointed President of the Sanhedrin by Herod the Great about 30-36, B. C. E.,) preaching against the abuses of his time, says: "Increase of bondwomen causes increase of fornication. Increase of bondmen causes increase of theft." Remarks which prove not only the proneness of owners to increase the numbers of their slaves, but also the depravity of character generally imputed to slaves.

In the *Mishna* tr: *Ketuboth*, chap. iv. §5, we read: "These are the kinds of work which the woman is bound to do for her husband. She must grind corn, and bake, and wash, and cook, and suckle her child, make his bed, and work in wool. If she

brought him one bondwoman, she need not grind, bake, or wash; if two, she need not cook nor suckle her child; if three, she need not work in wool nor make his bed; if four, she may sit in her easy chair." In the same *Mishna*, chap. viii., §5: "Should aged bondmen or bondwomen fall to her (the wife) by inheritance, they are to be sold to purchase land of which he (the husband) enjoys the usufruct. But R' Simeon ben Gamaliel saith: '*She can forbid the sale*, because they (aged slaves) are an ornament to her father's house.'" Dr. Raphall adds:

"The fact that slavery existed in Judea from the return of Ezra and the exiles from Babylon, till the expulsion of the Jews under Hadrian, has never been questioned among us."

But while these occasional allusions to slavery in the *Mishna* show that it still lingered in Judea in the time of Christ, it is the opinion of learned Jews that Slavery had then ceased to be prominent in the nation. Indeed, this is evident from the silence of all contemporaneous history as to Hebrew Slavery, and from the humiliating circumstances in which the Jews then were as a tributary people. *They* did not adopt Roman laws and usages; neither could they fully carry out their own. These considerations, together with those urged in the text, satisfactorily explain the silence of Christ as to slavery. There is no proof that He really came in contact with it; and so far as it existed among the Jews it was soon to perish with their whole polity.

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## APPENDIX C.

I HAVE no wish to exaggerate the evils of Slavery as it exists in the Southern States of this Union. I know that there are many humane masters, who treat their own slaves with kindness, and who frown upon acts of cruelty. But after all, the *law* defines the system to be one of pure CHATTELISM. The slave is not a *person* but a chattel. The Russian serf can not be alienated from the soil on which he was born. His master may change, but the serf lives on in his hut with his family. But when the kind master of a Southern plantation becomes bankrupt or dies, the law looks upon his slaves as marketable property, and sells them to any purchaser, regardless of local and family ties. The sum of all the evils of slavery lies in that one fact;—before the law the slave is not a reasonable person, having inalienable human

rights, but a thing held for the use of the master; and this is *Roman Slavery* as contradistinguished from Hebrew servitude.

I do not charge upon Southern slaveholders as a class, all the barbarities of the Roman code. Yet every cruelty recorded of that system has been perpetrated upon slaves at the South, either by mob violence, or by some unprincipled master or overseer, who has escaped punishment through some fiction of the law.

For fuller details of the Roman Slave-law, I refer the reader to Blair's "*Inquiry into the State of Slavery among the Romans*," Edinburgh edition. As a means of comparison let him take Stroud's "Sketch of the Laws of Slavery." The "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin," page 207, presents the following items:

"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be CHATTELS personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatever.—2 Brev. Dig. 219. Prince's Dig. 446. Cobb's Dig. 971."

"A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs.—Lou. Civil Code, art. 35. Stroud's Sketch, p. 22."

"Such obedience is the consequence only of uncontrolled authority over the body. There is nothing else which can operate to produce the effect. The power of the master must be *absolute*, to render the submission of the slave perfect.—Judge Ruffin's decision in the Case of *The State v. Mann*. Wheeler's Law of Slavery, 246."

"It is clear that slaves have no legal capacity to assent to any contract. With the consent of their master, they may marry, and their moral power to agree to such a contract or connection as that of marriage can not be doubted; but whilst in a state of slavery it can not produce any civil effect, because slaves are *deprived of all civil rights*."

"A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but what must belong to his master.—Lou. Civil Code, Article 35. Stroud, p. 22.

"According to Judge Ruffin, a slave is 'one doomed in his own person, and his posterity, to live without knowledge, and without the capacity to make any thing his own, and to toil that another may reap the fruits.'—2 Wheeler's Law of Slavery, p. 246. *State v. Mann*."

"All the acquisitions of the slave in possession are the property of his master, notwithstanding the promise of his master that the slave shall have certain of them.—*Gist v. Toohey*, 2 Rich. 424."

"A slave paid money which he had earned over and above his wages, for the purchase of his children, into the hands of B, and B purchased such children with the money. Held that the master of such slaves was entitled to recover the money of B.—*Ibid*."